

Bomb Threats

Checklist goes under your telephone in the office

Most bomb threats are received by phone. Bomb threats are serious until proven otherwise. Remain calm and obtain information with the checklist below.

If a bomb threat is received by phone:

1. Remain calm. Use checklist below. (You may want to print the checklist and place under your telephone for easy access.
2. If your phone has a display, copy the number and/or letters on the window display.
3. The most crucial information you can obtain from the caller is **detonation time, location, and appearance of the bomb**.
4. Don't hang up. Have someone call 911 from another phone. Give the phone number where the bomb threat is received.

DO NOT:

- Use two-way radios or cellular phone; radio signals have the potential to detonate a bomb.
- Evacuate the building until police arrive and evaluate the threat.
- Activate the fire alarm.
- Touch or move a suspicious package.

Signs of a suspicious package:

- No return address
- Excessive postage
- Stains
- Strange odor
- Strange sounds
- Unexpected

If a bomb threat is received by note:

- Call 911 immediately.
- Do not handle the note.

BOMB THREAT CHECKLIST

Exact words of threat:

Time of call: _____

Number where phone call was received:

Ask in order:

1. When will it explode? _____
2. Where is it located? _____
3. What does it look like? _____
4. What kind of bomb is it? _____
5. What will make it explode? _____
6. Did you place the bomb? _____ Why? _____
7. What is your name? _____
8. Where are you? _____

Caller's voice:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| ___ Accent | ___ Distinct | ___ Nasal |
| ___ Angry | ___ Excited | ___ Normal |
| ___ Calm | ___ Familiar, like: _____ | ___ Ragged |
| ___ Clearing throat | | ___ Rapid |
| ___ Cracking voice | ___ Female | ___ Raspy |
| ___ Crying | ___ Laughter | ___ Slow |
| ___ Deep | ___ Lisp | ___ Slurred |
| ___ Deep breathing | ___ Loud | ___ Soft |
| ___ Disguised | ___ Male | ___ Stutter |

Background sounds:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| ___ Animal | ___ House | ___ Office machinery |
| ___ Booth | ___ Kitchen | ___ PA system |
| ___ Clear | ___ Local | ___ Static |
| ___ Factory machinery | ___ Long distance | ___ Street |

Threat language:

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| ___ Incoherent | ___ Message read | ___ Taped |
| ___ Irrational | ___ Profane | ___ Well-spoken |

Bomb Threats

Bomb threats are delivered in a variety of ways. The majority of threats are called in to the target. Occasionally these calls are through a third party. Sometimes a threat is communicated in writing or by a recording.

Two logical explanations for reporting a bomb threat are:

1. The caller has definite knowledge or believes that an explosive or incendiary bomb has been or will be placed and he/she wants to minimize personal injury or property damage. The caller may be the person who placed the device or someone who has become aware of such information.
2. The caller wants to create an atmosphere of anxiety and panic which will, in turn, result in a disruption of the normal activities at the facility where the device is purportedly placed.

Whatever the reason for the report, there will certainly be a reaction to it. Through proper planning, the wide variety of potentially uncontrollable reactions can be greatly reduced.

Decision Time

The most serious of all decisions to be made by management in the event of a bomb threat is whether to evacuate the building. In many cases, this decision may have already been made during the development of the bomb incident plan. Management may pronounce a carte blanche policy that, in the event of a bomb threat, total evacuation will be effective immediately. This decision circumvents the calculated risk and demonstrates a deep concern for the safety of personnel in the building. However, such a decision can result in costly loss of time.

Essentially, there are three alternatives when faced with a bomb threat:

1. Ignore the threat.
2. Evacuate immediately.
3. Search and evacuate if warranted.

Ignoring the threat completely can result in some problems. While a statistical argument can be made that very few bomb threats are real, it cannot be overlooked that bombs have been located in connection with threats. If employees learn that bomb threats have been received and ignored, it could result in morale problems and have a long-term adverse effect on your business. Also, there is the possibility that if the bomb threat caller feels that he/she is being ignored, he/she may go beyond the threat and actually plant a bomb.

Evacuating immediately on every bomb threat is an alternative that on face value appears to be the preferred approach. However, the negative factors inherent in this approach must be considered. The obvious result of immediate evacuation is the disruptive effect on your business. If the bomb threat caller knows that your policy is to evacuate each time a call is made, he/she can continually call and force your business to a standstill. An employee, knowing that the policy

is to evacuate immediately, may make a threat in order to get out of work. Also, a bomber wishing to cause personal injuries could place a bomb near an exit normally used to evacuate and then call in the threat.

Initiating a search after a threat is received and evacuating a building after a suspicious package or device is found is the third, and perhaps most desired, approach. It is certainly not as disruptive as an immediate evacuation and will satisfy the requirement to do something when a threat is received. If a device is found, the evacuation can be accomplished expeditiously while at the same time avoiding the potential danger areas of the bomb.

Searches

A search of the area by employees is the best method to determine if there is a suspicious object in the area since employees are familiar with their work area and will recognize something that is out of place. Police personnel will assist employees during a search. Employees will not be forced to search an area.

Personnel should only search their immediate work area. Convey results of the search to security or the police department. Searches of other building areas will be carried out by employees, security, or police teams.

Explosions can be packaged in a variety of containers and will most likely be camouflaged. The container may be a common article, such as a backpack, book, box, grocery bag, athletic bag, airline flight bag, attache case, etc. Look for the unusual or something that appears to be out of place. It is important that someone familiar with the area assist with the search in order to note something unusual or alien to the surroundings. Anything that does not belong or cannot be adequately explained is a suspicious object! **DO NOT TOUCH THE OBJECT!**

Letter Bombs

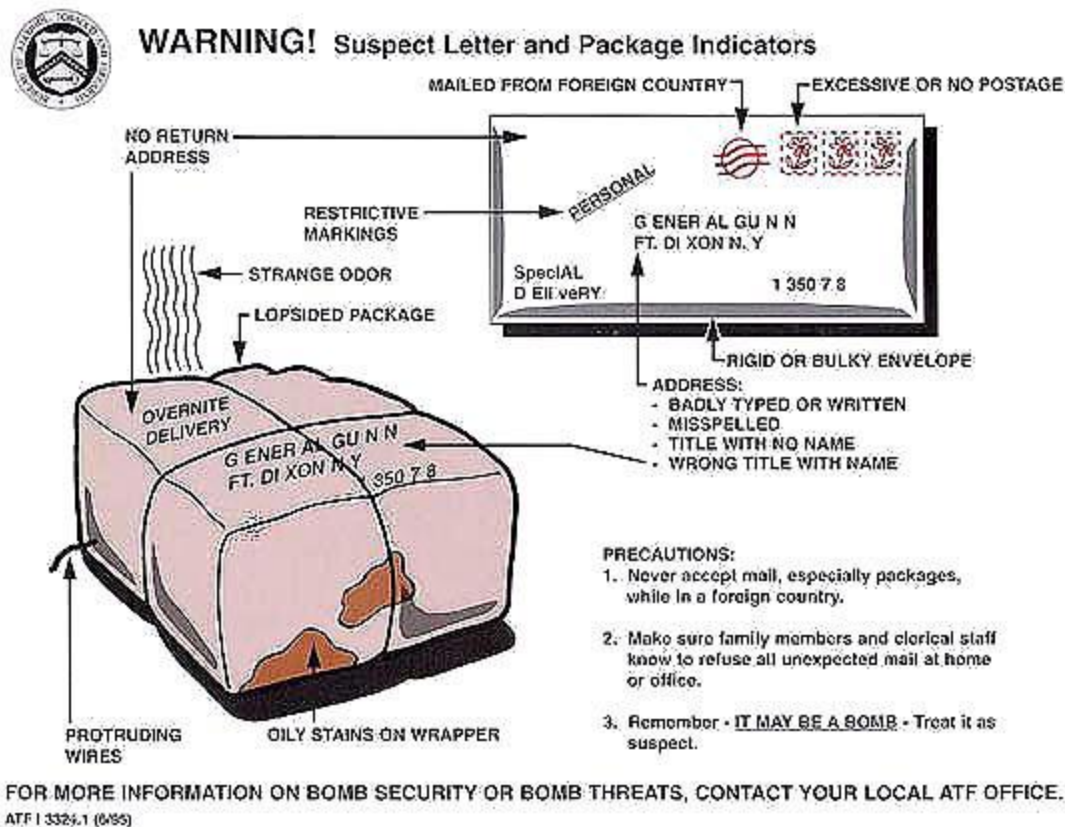
Letter or package bombs represent an excellent delivery method if the motive of the attack is to inflict injury upon a specific individual. Employees should be very alert for:

- 1) Balance - In letter bombs, device components may shift and tend to "unbalance" an item of mail leaving it feeling "unusual" as compared to other similar items of mail.
- 2) Sweating - Some chemicals used in explosives may "sweat" and result in "greasy" marks on wrappings.
- 3) Odors - Some of these chemicals may also give off unusual odors, which the human nose will quickly sense. For example, the Oklahoma City bomb was constructed of nitrogen based commercial fertilizer. The next time you use garden or lawn fertilizer, note the smell. Nitrogen explosive devices may emit the same odor.

4) Feel - Letters have a normal "feel." Those that contain devices may simply not "feel" right, or they may be "stiff." This can indicate the presence of plastic or metallic components as opposed to the normal paper stuffing.

5) Packaging - Be very cautious of envelopes or packages, which are found within other packages. This may be an attempt to mask or hide the actual explosive device.

6) Addressing - Be cautious of items marked "To Be Opened Only By," or one which carries a strange place of origin, script, disguised or unusual writing or type, obvious misspelling or altering of words in the address field, or the lack of a return address.



Preplan, educate yourself and train your employees, believe and prepare. The topic of bomb threats is difficult to present because the perpetrator has such a wide variety of options available to him. However, the modern bomb threat is to be taken seriously and warrants your protective resources. This is not a threat area to learn about from on-the-job experience. Act now in a proactive fashion, and better assure the protection of both personnel, and assets.